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RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BELMOPAN 000524

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [AMGT](#) [BH](#)

SUBJECT: TFJM01: BELMOPAN SITREP: EAC MEETING AND PREPARATIONS

¶1. Embassy Belmopan EAC met at 1000 local to review situation and preparations for Hurricane Dean. Given the new track of the hurricane and the likelihood of serious danger for northern Belize and coastal areas including the cayes, the EAC decided:

-- local staff were excused at 1200 to complete their own preparations

-- the Embassy will close by 1800 local time (2000 DC time) for the night

-- all American personnel will shelter at the Belmopan housing compound for the night. Military Liaison Officer Americans (four people) and 11 long-term TDY military personnel will also relocate to the Belmopan housing compound for the night. (NOTE: All Peace Corps volunteers have been consolidated in Belmopan at a secure hotel near the PC office. They will shelter there until the storm has passed and then the PC will assess when it is safe to send the volunteers back to their sites. END NOTE.)

-- The Embassy will re-open for emergency services as soon as possible Tuesday morning. Local staff have been advised to use their own best judgment and only come to work if safe to do so. We expect to have sufficient consular section staffing to handle demand but may have to request assistance if damage here is too extensive.

AMERICAN CITIZENS

¶2. We have been in contact with wardens testing our network and reiterating standing hurricane preparedness guidance since Thursday. A formal warden message, approved by CA, is going out. We have also been in regular contact with the police and with the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) to seek information on American citizens and monitor progress of evacuations.

¶3. Hotels and tour operators on the cayes and in Belize City have been evacuating Americans for several days. Those efforts continued Monday. Many guests are being relocated to accommodations inland to the west of Belmopan or have left the country. American Airlines has added an additional flight Monday afternoon for people who wish to leave. Continental is trying to accommodate passengers on their last flight or on the American flight. AA and Continental have cancelled all flights for Tuesday.

¶4. While tourists are generally evacuating coastal areas, some American residents are remaining with their property despite evacuation notices from local authorities.

EMBASSY PREPARATIONS

¶5. OFDA staff arrive Monday and will work with NEMO to coordinate disaster assistance as needed. JTF-B has offered helicopter support for assessment as soon as conditions permit.

¶6. Embassy has stockpiled food, water and fuel for generators.

Individual staff have made preparations and have adequate food and water on hand. Housing compound hurricane shutters have been installed.

COMMUNICATIONS

¶7. We expect that NLT 1600 (1800 DC time) local we will need to secure our satellite dish against expected winds. This will put our comms on the backup circuit, a commercial leased line. As a result the Embassy will lose IVG and ability to send cables until we can re-orient the dish, probably no earlier than late afternoon Tuesday.

IPC is working with IRM in Washington to coordinate. We are assuming that the local provider, BTL, will also lose service at some point in the evening.

¶8. Following are contact numbers for TF use overnight. We will advise ASAP Tuesday morning when we have re-opened.

All commercial and cell numbers start with +501-

The Embassy's main commercial number is: 822-4011

DCM Leonard Hill; Cell: 610-5202; Embassy ext home: 4601; CML home: 822-3186
Iridium phone: 00-8816-214-57181

ACS Kim Valdes-Dapena: cell: 623-9821; Embassy ext home: 4616

DO Sergey Troitsky: Cell: 610-5030; Embassy ext home: 4611

RSO Joe Harms: Cell: 610-5020; Embassy ext home: 4605

IMO Allen Gandy: Cell: 610-4128; Embassy ext home: 4618

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